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RELIGION NOT CHRISTIANITY.

A GOSPEL TRACT

ADDRESSED TO ENQUIRING SINNERS,

BY THE

REV. H. B. WRAY.

PUBLISHED AT THE EVANGELIZER OFFICE, PRESCOTT, C.W.

1861.

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RELIGION NOT CHRISTIANITY.

By Christianity I mean the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the supernatural revelation of God respecting the salvation of sinners.— By Religion I mean the natural theories of man; such a belief in a Superior being, and judgment to be passed upon him in a future state, as will lead him to propitiate the power which is to judge him. It would be difficult to find any one who was not influenced by some sense of religion, in this latter sense of the term.— Every one, however ignorant of the Gospel, has some religion of his own; sometimes it may be Christianity, sometimes a modification of Christianity, frequently a base counterfeit of it, and more frequently a most absurd compound of error and superstition.

Now, my fellow sinners, as I desire that you should be not only religious but Christian, I purpose setting before you in an elementary way, the distinctive principles and peculiar doctrines of Christianity. I shall on this occasion make a few introductory remarks in the shape of suggestive materials of thought, addressed chiefly to the young, which, may the Lord bless and make instrumental in bringing you all into the faith of those who were *first called Christians at Antioch*. Is it not surprising that the majority of professing Christians do not know what Christianity is; is it not more surprising that the majority of professedly Christian instructors, instead of teaching the distinctive

principles, doctrines, and duties of Christianity, teach the ethics and duties which are common to Heathen, Jewish, Pagan and all false systems of belief. Young people, who have no definite ideas upon such subjects, are not aware that almost all heathen philosophers inculcated virtue and morality, and that the Pagan devotee is far more influenced by his religion, than the majority of those Christians whose sincerity we are enabled to form a judgment of by observing their usual manner of life.

If Christianity rests upon certain fundamental principles, surely Christians should know what the first principles of their religion are. Most people believe Christianity to be true as a system, while few know what the peculiar truths of Christianity are. "I appeal," writes Hannah Moore, "to clergymen who are called to attend dying beds, do they not find, that the persons to whom they are addressing themselves, have no first principles to which they can be referred, that they are ignorant, not only of the science but the language of Christianity." Were you to ask the accomplished young lady whose education was finished at a first class school what Christianity is, perhaps she would answer that it was the religion of Christians, and perhaps with no more accurate knowledge of the subject than if she had said that Hindooism is the religion of Hindoos.

All preaching and other religious instruction is vague and superficial, out of

place, unless the peculiar doctrines and principles of Christianity are understood by the hearer. If real instruction is to be given it must commence at the point where present knowledge ends. That young lady's minister assumed a higher degree of knowledge than she actually possessed.—We must lay the foundation if we would provide for the security of the superstructure. I am convinced that much of the infidelity, rationalism, and scepticism of our age is in a great measure attributable to defective public instruction, defective because not sufficiently elementary and expository. There is far too much vague, mere moral, exhortatory preaching addressed to the feelings, and far too little clear distinctive Scripture teaching. The loose gospelling, vague and negative theology of all churches has taught the world the first principles of infidelity, by suppressing, spiritualizing and explaining away all the express teaching and positive theology of the Bible—thus sceptics have been emboldened to carry out these principles which the church has sanctioned to their fullest development in the absolute denial of every truth which distinguishes Christianity from all human systems of religion. Primitive Christian practice consisted in *obeying from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered*. Modern religious practice consists in believing what we please, and doing what we like.)

The people, who seldom study theology or their Bibles, are left in comparative ignorance of the first principles of Christianity. Texts are selected as mottoes, but the mind of the Spirit in the context, is not sought after, or the primary application of the language as a whole is not elucidated; hence in the midst of religious privileges there is a deplorable lack of Scripture knowledge and intermittent excitement instead of instruction in righteousness. In order to ascertain what distinguishes Christianity from all human systems of religion, we must seek instruction from the infallible authority of Scripture. Without this acknowledged standard of truth there can be no first principles, no foundation to build arguments upon, no premises to draw conclusions from. All religious truths must be tested, not by their mere uniformity and agreement with ethical theories, but with the Scriptures. Conformity with God's

word is the only infallible test of truth in doctrine or practice. The question respecting all moral and religious subjects is not their abstract truthfulness and reasonableness, but this—are they Scriptural?—However conclusively and inductively we may reason upon the subject of religion, if our principles or premises are taken from other authority than the Bible, our conclusions are unsound and worthless. A series of propositions, results and conclusions may be logically true and consistent with each other, and yet false; so all systems of religion which do not derive their principles from the Bible, however harmonious and consistent with their own laws, are unsound and worthless. Theology has added no new truth to Christianity but a vast amount of error. Christianity is the religion of the Bible, therefore the distinctive principles and genius of Christianity must be learned from the Bible. We must believe all things in the Bible and prove all things from the Bible. Few have taken their first impressions of religion from the Bible, hence such ignorance and difference of opinion among professing Christians.

The religious instruction generally given to young persons is based upon rational rather than Scriptural principles. Christian parents teach their children natural, not evangelical religion; they are afraid to trust God with His own truth. The doctrines of grace cannot be understood by the child, therefore they are not to be taught. Pelagianism and Socinianism are taught because, perhaps, being better suited to human nature they find a readier reception in the young mind. But the religion of God, communicated to the soul is a supernatural act, and the same Almighty energy is alike displayed in the impartation of this principle to the mind of the parent as of the child. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.—Except ye receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ye cannot enter therein.* Had our Lord revealed to Nicodemus when a youth, the mystery of the new birth, perhaps instead of doubtfully asking *how can these things be*, he would have believed and said, like little Samuel, "*Speak Lord for thy servant heareth.*" In order to adapt religious instruction to the comprehension of the young, mere natural religion

is taught which plant to These attention very like the one hold n teney for Go so lea we ca paying false o have a aim, is than r able to asketh them. that equally God gener in her earth that r way of Ch find. they Gosp believ of th clear God Ro and C custo Christi tures were Chal tianism speci Religi cons natu the l reve cient Vate Chr Alm The ligic

is taught, and the seeds of scepticism sown which must be rooted out in after years to plant the incorruptible seed of the Word. These obvious truisms especially demand attention from the rising generation of our very liberal age, who are led to think that the only consistent views of religion are to hold no views at all, that religious consistency is illiberality, and a sacred jealousy for God's truth is bigotry, whose minds are so leavened with the political creed that we can only be orthodox Christians by paying equal reverence to all forms of faith, false or true. How few in any community have any decided religious views or even aim, if they aim at anything at all, higher than mere regularity of life; how few are able to give an answer to every man that asketh their reason for the hope that is in them. Are not people mostly of opinion that all modes of religious belief are equally safe; through the death of Christ God is rendered so merciful there is a general impunity in sin, and all will meet in heaven at last, however far they are on earth from that newness of life, that faith, that repentance unto salvation, that narrow way and straight gate, which the author of Christianity has assured us few shall find. Our Lord as ~~was~~ expressly that they who believe in the truths of the Gospel shall be damned, as that they who believe them shall be saved. Is it not then, of the utmost importance that we should clearly distinguish between the religion of God and the inventions of man.

Religion, divinity, and theology are Latin and Greek terms of heathen origin, although custom and use have fixed their sense to Christian doctrines taken out of the Scriptures. The most ancient heathen writers were called Theologues, the Egyptians and Chaldeans had their theology. Christianity, then, is generally a religion—specially, the religion of Christians.—Religion, correctly speaking, should be considered either as heathen or Christian, natural or supernatural: the one is from the light of nature, the other from divine revelation. The Persians, Greeks, and ancient Britons, with their Druids, Bards and Vates were far more religious than modern Christians. All nations have some religion. Almost all wars have been religious wars. The first man who ever died, died for religion. The followers of false religions

have ever been more zealous than the Christian members of the church of God. Did you see a poor deluded Hindoo lying on a bed of spikes, propitiating his gods, however you might pity the absurdity of his belief, you could not doubt the sincerity of his devotion. Who more strictly religious than those to whom our Lord said, "*the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*" Ignatius Loyola was more religious, sacrificed more, and did more for his church than any hundred Protestants have done since for Christ. Louis XIV. of France, and Henry VIII. of England, were not the best exponents of Christianity, yet both were very religious, the one was so very devout and regular in the forms of worship as to be styled "Most Christian;" the other, "Defender of the Faith." His Protestant daughter, Elizabeth, was very religious and a great admirer of the Bible. "I walk," said she, "many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodly herbs of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, digest them by musing, so that having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of life." But her last moments lead us to fear, notwithstanding her admiration of the Scriptures, that she was ignorant of the most precious and distinguishing truth which could alone speak peace to her troubled conscience—salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ. When dying she cried out "An inch of time—millions of money for an inch of time." She had been used to have a new dress every day, and had ten thousand costly dresses in her wardrobe, yet her soul was naked, she had not the *wedding garment, the fine linen clean and white which is the righteousness of saints.* Valueless then was all her beautiful metaphor and classic learning, while ignorant of that truth which can turn the hut of the beggar into the palace of God—the truth which enabled the poet Cowper's poor village lace girl to

"Rejoice, and read with sparkling eyes,
Her title clear to mansions in the skies,"—

the truth which enabled another Elizabeth, the poor Dairyman's Daughter, upon her dying bed of straw, to exclaim—"Victory, victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ—

RELIGION NOT CHRISTIANITY.

His blood cleanseth from all sin." Her soul was ready in full dress for the marriage supper, arrayed in the royal robe of her Redeemer's righteousness. She was, indeed, a *King's daughter all glorious within*, and she now beholds the King in his beauty.

Cain and Abel represent the two classes into which the world is divided—natural and supernatural. Natural religion may be considered either as it was in Adam, before the fall, or as it is in his posterity since the fall. Supernatural, or what is by pure revelation, was first signified in the prophetic declaration of mercy pronounced by God to the serpent—"It, the seed of the woman, shall bruise thy head."—These mystical words reveal the sum of evangelical religion, and contain the germ of Christianity, the incarnation of the Messiah and salvation by His blood. This kind of Theology was more clearly developed by those significant types, the skins of slain beasts, which our first parents wore, beautiful emblems of the blood-bought robe of salvation, the wedding garment of the redeemed; the justifying righteousness of Christ, which God puts upon His people. Abel was a believer in Evangelical religion, he approached God as a sinner, he brought blood the typical sacrifice for sin. Cain was an unbeliever in revealed religion, still he performed a religious act, he laid an offer upon God's altar, and certainly, to a natural mind, a more becoming one than the blood of an innocent animal; but he self-righteously despised the sacrifice which the Lord ordained for sin, and rationally deemed his first fruits better. Salvation by blood, was foolishness to Cain as it was to the Pharisees, and is to thousands of very religious, moral and orthodox people now, who have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, who being ignorant of God's righteousness are going about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. This distinguishing truth of Christianity, which Cain stumbled at, is till the rock of offence, the hard saying, the offence of the cross to the natural mind, but to those whose senses are exer-

cised to discern spiritual things, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

"Such was the wicked reasoning Cain,
And such by nature still are we;
Until by grace we're born again,
Faithless, blind, and proud as he.

Like him, the way of grace we slight,
And in our own devices trust;
Call evil good, and darkness light,
And hate and persecute the just."

What Luther said of Popery is true of self-righteousness, "Every man is born with a pope in his heart." Every man is born with a Cain in his heart. The cross has ever been to the many foolishness, but it is the wisdom of God. Philosophy never propounded this doctrine, science never discerned it, reason never guessed at it, man's wisdom never devised it—no, God revealed it.

This is the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, the Gospel truth which, if a man ignorant of theology as the thief on the cross believes, and were to die the next moment; he possesses that knowledge which is essential to salvation: ignorant of all other truths of Christianity and knowing this in a very small measure, the believer knows the way of acceptance with an offended God. *How man can be justified with God.* How a holy and just God who will in no way clear the guilty does clear, pardon, justify, sanctify, glorify guilty, vile, hell-deserving sinners. Exod. xxxiv. 7. The apparent contradiction, presented in this passage, can alone harmonize God's attributes of justice and mercy in the sinner's salvation. This plan of salvation shows us how God can pardon the vilest of sinners without clearing the guilty; how God can be just to his holy law and the justifier of the ungodly; it enables the guiltiest wretch on earth to hope for pardon, and lift up his head before the tribunal of Jehovah with the confidence of an angel, not upon a plea of mercy only, but of justice, satisfied justice. Christ, as surety, became responsible for the law-debt of His people, he became amenable to law and justice for the sins of all believers.

But if God does not clear the guilty, how does He forgive iniquity; if He forgives iniquity, must He not clear the guilty. One word solves the problem—atonement; Jesus Christ as the sinners surety and sub-

stitute, took on him our sins and thus, by imputation was esteemed virtually guilty; the sins of all believers are fully atoned for by Jesus becoming their surety, their sins are imputed to Him, His righteousness imputed to them; thus, His name is called *Jesus because He saves His people from their sins*. Hence, God in pardoning believers does not clear the guilty because in the eye of a satisfied law they are innocent; as guilty, they have been punished in the death of Christ, the legally accounted one. This Gospel plan of saving sinners is not a tenet, a single doctrine of Christianity but Christianity itself; it alone exhibits God infinitely just and infinitely merciful, and makes salvation wholly of grace without works of any kind, as necessary for its reception. In this doctrine *mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other*. This is Christianity, and all systems of religion that suppress, modify or adulterate this doctrine are Christianity's base counterfeit, dishonorable to the finished work of Christ.

All men ignorant of the Gospel, although most devout religionists, worship like the Athenians an unknown God, and hate the just and holy God of the Bible. The God of the natural man, is no more the just and terrible God of the Bible, who will not clear the guilty, than the Osiris of the Egyptians, or the Jupiter of the Greeks. The belief of the Gospel, can alone give us correct views of the character of God and ourselves. Upon the ideas which men form of God's character depends the character of their religion.

How can man be justified with God, is a question of such eternal moment, that none should rest till they have it satisfactorily answered to their own souls. There is in every one of you a conviction that you need a righteousness in which to stand before Him, *who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. But while this conviction is universal as humanity, there are very few, even among moral, living Christians, who seriously set about the consideration of this subject, and still fewer who understand what God in mercy has revealed concerning it. And I might add, fewer still who teach this blessed doctrine as the sinners only ground of hope.—While all professing Christians acknowledge a belief in Christ's atonement to be

some way necessary to salvation, yet comparatively few, even members of the church, upon a dying bed can tell how Christ's work becomes effectual for the salvation, peace, comfort and assurance of the individual sinner. From a total ignorance of this blessed doctrine of substitution, which was Paul's sheet anchor, (Philip. iii. 9,) sick and dying persons invariably seek comfort from their evidences, experiences, faith, conscience, and good life. These are poor saviours—*miserable comforters are ye all*. They build their hopes upon something within themselves instead of without themselves, they make a saviour of their feelings, or their faith, instead of Christ. The question with them is not *what* they believe, but *how* they feel. Faith as a moral quality is no more the ground, or meritorious cause of our salvation than works. Faith is the medium through which the sinner receives the righteousness which makes the sinner just. *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with Him is plentiful redemption, and He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. My soul doth wait upon the Lord, and in His word do I hope*. Christ, and the promises of God, are the sinners ground of hope and consolation. The evidences of the Spirit's work within us, our faith, experience or sanctification, are not the ground of our hope—no Christ is our hope, *who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*.

From the wide spread conviction of guilt, and in-dwelling sin, and from ignorance of God's revealed plan of saving guilty sinners, men now, and in every age, have gone about to establish their own righteousness. It was in pursuit of this that Cain offered to God the fruit of his labor. It was in pursuit of this, that the heathen, in their bloody rites offered their children in sacrifices to their idols; giving the *fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls*.—It is in pursuit of this that the Hindoo hopes, by self-imposed tortures, to commend himself to his deities.—'Twas after this that the Jew busied himself in fulfilling all the outward performances of the ceremonial ritual and, forgetful of the spirituality of the law, was scrupulous only as to its letter.—'Tis after this that the Romanist subjects himself to the yoke of legal bondage, to fastings and penances,

and mortifications, believing that by these he can merit grace and increase of glory.—
 'Tis in pursuit of this that the Socinian, who dares to reject the Deity and Atonement of the Saviour preaches a lifeless morality and spreads his plutions in the presumptuous hope of passing, in his own strength, the gulf between earth and heaven.—It is in pursuit of this, that countless multitudes of religious people, Protestants forsooth, *do many things* and *hear the word gladly* and are very religious, while they mistake the form of godliness for its living power. Alas, it is not only in systems openly opposed to Christianity that this spirit may be traced, it lies at the root of much of the Theology that claims an orthodox descent, and is the very essence of the faith of many a one to whom the name of Protestant is a boast, and by whom the charge of Socinian teaching would be considered a libel. How many thousand sermons are passed off for Evangelical, which might be preached acceptably to professedly Socinian congregations.

What is it but this ignorance of Christ when a sinner is startled by the approach of death, and is forced seriously to consider his prospects with respect to eternity, that makes him look back upon an honorable course, a good, useful, temperate life, a blameless walk; and seek in a retrospect of the past for comfort, or rather refuge from the accusations of conscience—or again, when the spirit is pleading with the sinner, convicting him of sin, of judgment and of righteousness, what hinders him from at once embracing the Gospel, and sinner as he is, going to Jesus for pardon and justification, saying *Lord remember me—Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.* This is all my Theology.

"Just as I am, and waiting not,
 To cleanse my soul from one foul blot,
 To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
 O Lamb of God, I come."

What but this, that in the retrospect of the past he has nothing in himself on which to lean. In the one case there is a false hope cherished from the fancied supposition of merit, *professed*; in the other, real hope is rejected, from a consciousness that no such merit exists. In both these cases, the same ignorance of the Gospel plan of

acceptance with God prevails, and the same spirit operates which influenced the young man in the Gospel, when he came to Christ enquiring, *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life.* Ignorance of the justifying righteousness of sinners, the *righteousness of God*, in contra-distinction to the righteousness of the law; Christ's righteousness is the righteousness of God, for Christ is God, Rom. iii. 20–25. Here we have the mystery of godliness explained. Hooker, with beautiful conciseness, thus expresses this mystery.—"Man sinned: God suffered—God became man's sin, that man might be made the righteousness of God." Morality is essential to the Christian character, but morality is not Christianity. Christian morality implies a belief in the doctrines of the New Testament, so that the duties of Christianity may be seen to grow out of its doctrines. Christian practice differs as essentially from Pagan practice as do the doctrines of Christianity from Paganism. Almost every Heathen moralist has recommended temperance, and the forgiveness of injuries, but none have ever taught men to be temperate, and to forgive upon Gospel principles. How could they! They have never taught men to forgive because we have been forgiven—this is peculiar to Christianity—this flows from the doctrine of the Atonement, and can flow from nothing else. Morality of life and outward decorum, the law of public opinion requires from us.—Outward decorum, however, is not the rule whereby we shall be judged at the bar of God, where the amiable Christian and the moral Heathen are accounted alike unrighteous when destitute of Christ's righteousness.

There are many in the religious world eminent for their zeal, and the high tone of morality that pervades their words and actions, yet the fear of God is not before their eyes, the love and knowledge of God, as their covenant and reconciled God in Christ Jesus, is not shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. We can imagine a faultless moral character, the very twin sister of Solomon's model wife, of whom it is said, *other daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all*—a very paragon of natural perfection, one who had kept all the commandments from her youth up; one whom Jesus could

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have loved, whose pure mind was never sullied by an unchaste thought, whose eyes are ever closed against vanity, whose holy ears are ever stopped to the siren voice of the world; like the Holy of holies in the Temple, none but the high priest must enter there. Yet such a faultless character, if destitute of the vital actuating principle of the Gospel, the holy Law of God pronounces radically defective, corrupt, *dead in trespasses and sins*.—Alas, how many such perfect characters may find the door shut against them, and miss heaven at last, Luke xiii. 25. How many of noble and royal blood will be glad to take hold of the skirt of Mary Magdalene in that awful day when the *last shall be first and the first last*, when the *filth and offscouring of the earth* shall be heralded among the aristocracy of heaven. But do not suppose me for one moment to imply, that it is not incumbent upon the Christian teacher to enforce the necessity of morality and good works. Nothing is more foolish than the antipathy evinced by some religionists to the preaching of morality, as if it infringed upon the doctrines of grace. Would to God there was more pure morality preached. If indeed, it be a cold, heartless philosophic virtue detached from the Gospel and independent of its influence, show it the door, let it be excluded from the sanctuary. Such a philosophy of morals presents erroneous views of the condition of man, and the character of God, it appeals not to the revealed will of God as the standard of right and wrong, and enforces the obligations of virtue, rather from the considerations of feeling, honor, interest, public opinion and worldly policy, than from those higher, nobler, purer motives which Jehovah addresses to us in His Word. But if it be a morality founded upon Christian principle, and looking directly to the will of God as its ruler, and the glory of God as its end, it is assuredly a proper subject for the pulpit and suited to the state of man, as a fallen creature. Christians are become so like the heathen in their practice, they need to be reminded frequently, with a *verily, verily*, that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us not only that He might redeem us from all iniquity, but also to purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

It is much to be deplored that our zealous philanthropists and praiseworthy advocates of virtue and temperance, so seldom draw their arguments from the New Testament. The total absence of Gospel principle in the cause of "total abstinence," would make it appear that our popular lecturers deemed Christianity a drag on the chariot wheels of enlightened morality and human progress. Every body knows inebriety is in direct antagonism to the whole letter and tenor of the Scriptures, yet nobody knows who has read the New Testament, that a glass of wine or anything else, is absolutely forbidden. The precepts of the Gospel are general in their application, and not particular. The Gospel enjoins habits of temperance, sobriety in all things, yet there is no special command in regard to dietetics. The Apostle Peter's injunction, *be sober* is general, not particular, moral, not physical. Be not intoxicated with pleasure, business, sensuality, or sin. This mental inebriety is as injurious to the soul's health as physical dissipation to the body, it excludes God from the thoughts and drowns all heavenly aspirations.—"Society, society," said Madame De Stael. "how it renders the mind frivolous, and the heart hard, and makes us live for what people will say of us." The person who indulges freely in the world's sparkling cup of pleasure and fashionable gaiety, is drunk all the year round, ever tipping, never sober night or day; ever intoxicated with the mental alcohol of impure literature, stupefied with the poisonous fumes and enervating effects of vicious company and corrupting amusements, in which many total abstainers indulge, who desecrate the Lord's day in pleasure excursions and other intemperate revellings. The Gospel requires us to *abstain from all appearance of evil*, and tells us that *all things are lawful, but not expedient*. The Gospel requires not only *circumcision of the flesh*, but of the heart. Abstinence from any sensual gratification because such is injurious to physical health, or prejudicial to character and advancement in life, and not because such is forbidden by Christ, is the mere *circumcision of the flesh*. A Christian influenced by these motives is a nominal, not a real Christian; a letter, not a spirit Christian; for not being influenced by the love of Christ,

he is scarcely distinguishable from an abstemious Pagan. How many from overlooking this distinction mistake reformation of character for change of heart! They imagine because they have outwardly renounced intemperance and gross vices, they are inwardly Christ's disciples. Because they have kept out of the hands of the police, they are Christ's freemen, and *renewed in the Spirit of their minds*. The "lock-up" and the "stocks," are far more efficient reformers than the "pledge," yet most unsuccessful preachers of righteousness.

A celebrated temperance lecturer in proving, that the pledge was not enough, candidly, honestly, and above all conventional prejudices, writes thus—"Out of the many thousands of intemperate men who signed the pledge under me very few kept it to the end, unless they became new creatures in Jesus Christ. More recently, those who became ~~drunkards~~ cannot at all be depended upon, unless they also become Christians. Of those who have signed the pledge within a few years, not one has remained firm unless they took Jesus as their Prophet, Priest and King."

One of the most powerful preachers of any age tried the experiment of moral preaching for twelve years, and afterwards made the following emphatic declaration, "I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny, on all those deformities of character which awaken indignation against the pests and disturbers of human society. Now, could I, upon the strength of those expostulations, have got the thief to give up his stealing, and the liar his deviations from truth, it never occurred to me that all this might have been done, and yet the soul of every hearer have remained in full alienation from God, as destitute of the essence of religious principle as ever. But the interesting fact is, that during the whole of that period in which I made no attempt against the enmity of the carnal mind to God, I certainly did press the reformations of honour and truth, and integrity among my people, but I never once heard of any such reformations being effected; I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and proprieties of social life, had the weight of a feather on

the moral habits of my parishioners."—Here is an honest confession of a great mind. Yes, it was not till this eminent philosopher, Dr. Chalmers, learned the Gospel from the old woman of Kilmany, in the humble cottages of his flock, it was not till some God-instructed Aquilla or Priscilla taught this mighty Apollo the *way of the Lord more perfectly*, that he became impressed with the strictness of God's law and the utter alienation of man's heart; it was not till he urged upon his hearers as lost, guilty, perishing sinners the doctrines of Grace, and told them of the *righteousness of God*, that he saw any salutary change in their morals.

But, do I disapprove of total abstinence, no, in no wise, I commend the practice, not only from a glass of wine even for the stomach's sake, but from all those horrible decoctions which the Temperance faculty prescribe, which are more demoralizing to the stomach than wine, and not so beneficial for our oft infirmities. I disapprove, however, of enforcing abstinence upon heathen principles.

But to return, how is this righteousness to be had? *It is unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference*, be they heathen or Christian, bond or free, poor or rich, ignorant or learned, mean or noble, vicious or virtuous, intemperate or temperate. The crowned monarch and the ermined judge must wear it; the poor woman at the washtub, and the captive in the dungeon ~~may~~ wear this royal raiment—all must have it, my fellow-sinners, all who will be saved!!

This is Christianity, this is the truth of the Gospel, and I thank God, that this blessed truth is beautifully and explicitly set forth in the formularies of the Church, of which I am a minister. "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings, (11th Article.) This is the Gospel which Christ came down to our world to reveal, the Gospel which the Apostles preached and martyrs sealed with their blood by which saints lived, and upon which they rested their souls for time and eternity. The Gospel, which in the early days of Christianity crumbled heathenism to ruins, and in the sixteenth century restored the religion of the Bible to its

primitive purity. Many reject it, and laugh at its simplicity; others despise and mock it as if it would lead to licentiousness. But they, who taught by the Holy Spirit, have felt the plague of the heart's lusts, and understand its soul comforting efficacy, they who know it in the truth and power thereof, know that the belief of this despised doctrine, is the most powerfully constraining motive to good works and holiness of life—the governing principle which causes a man to give himself up, body, soul, and spirit to his God—they know that it is this alone which gives peace, happiness, hope—they know that if this distinguishing truth of Christianity is known and savingly believed—enough; if this unknown—worthless all religion and theology beside.

May God the Spirit teach you all this truth, and give you peace in believing it.—Search the Scriptures, make them your authoritative standard, and learn then from God the nature of true religion. While all Christians acknowledge the authority of the Bible in words, many virtually ignore it. Few teach the whole of the Bible; men from prejudice, party-spirit, expediency, or self-righteousness resort to suppressions, modifications, adulterations, reconciliations, pious frauds, and I know not what of palpable denials and contradictions of God's truth. They call this criticism, which means just this—I don't like what God has said, therefore I will make God speak what I like. Thus people can make any passage of Scripture to mean anything that they desire. Salmasius distinguished for his profound and extensive learning, after a life of laborious criticism has left these remarkable words for our admonition—“Had I one year more to live, all that time would be spent in reading the Psalms of David and Epistles of Paul.”

If any man will do His will, he shall

know of the doctrine whether it be of God. The humble doers of God's will, and the prayerful readers and hearers of His word, generally know all that is essential to salvation; and usually find that the more diligently they practice the precepts of Christianity the better they understand its doctrines. *He that doeth righteousness is righteous. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Coleridge has well said, “Our fellow-creatures can only judge what we are by what we do; but in the eye of our Maker, what we do is of no worth except as it flows from what we are. Unless works are done from Christian motives, and the worker is an accepted believer in Christ, they are not acceptable with God. The right discrimination of religious character is very useful now, when it is the fashion to pay homage to Christianity, with a *hail master*, and yet deny it the tribute and the influence which it claims over the heart and affections—when it is fashionable to assume its garb, ape its manners, and mimic its rites and ceremonies, but very unfashionable to practice its duties, participate in its self-denying spirit, and lofty, heaven-aspiring avoidance of every carnal and worldly conformity.

I trust that these remarks may lead you to a serious consideration of this all-important subject; if you, dismissing all prejudice and sectarian bias, and rejecting all human authority, go to the Bible as a sinner and not as a critic, with a single eye to the truth, the Spirit will *guide you into all truth, and give you a right understanding in all things.*

May it be so with us. May we know more and more of the *love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.*





